

The Laurels Homeowners Association

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is a Homeowners Association?

A Homeowners Association is a corporation that is formed by and for the residents of a community to act as the governing body. We oversee common area maintenance, covenant enforcement and a common standard for architecture and property maintenance. A Homeowners Association Board of Directors is elected by its homeowners to conduct the business of the HOA for the benefit of the community.

Is membership mandatory?

When you buy a property governed by a homeowners association, you automatically become a member of the association. You don't have the choice of not joining. The purchase of your home becomes a contract with the HOA. You agree that you'll obey all the HOA rules.

Are there specific rules for homeowners?

HOA rules are called covenants and restrictions. C&Rs usually apply to both you and your home. They might cover what color you can paint your home, what you can plant in your yard, how many cars you can own and park, and whether you can own a pet. There are usually noise restrictions as well. Rules differ, so carefully study the CC&Rs before you buy.

Are there penalties for breaking the rules?

When rules are broken, many HOAs punish homeowners. Many HOAs are corporations. As such, they are legal entities that can enforce contracts with their homeowners. The usual penalty for breaking a rule is a fine. If you refuse to pay, the HOA can take other steps, such as forcing the sale of your home.

Why do I pay dues?

Homeowners in The Laurels, a covenant-controlled development pay annual dues of \$225 as part of their membership. HOAs use this money for maintenance of common areas like our entrance, amenity area, holiday lights, irrigation, utilities etc.

What do I do if I receive a violation notice?

The orange violation notice will have specific information about what needs corrected and a contact number for the HOA Board member who issued the notice. If you are not sure why you received it or do not know how to correct the violation please contact the board member listed on the notice. The worst thing you can do is ignore it. A copy of our violation notice can be found on the web site.

Are there advantages of living in an HOA?

HOAs balance their restrictions with advantages. If the majority of homeowners follow the rules, you will never have a nuisance neighbor and your property value will be more stable because you won't have "that house" next door. You will have a voice, a vote and a contact for community concerns or issues in a HOA community.

What are covenants and how do I receive a copy of them?

Covenants are legal documents that are recorded on the land in the superior court within your county. The Homeowners Association board of directors determines the violations that need to be addressed. A copy of our covenants and restrictions are on the web site www.thelaurelshoa.org

How are violations reported?

Each of our 5 Board Members may issue violation notices. We do this by reviewing violations at regular meetings or by driving the community weekly. Homeowners may also report violations by contacting any board member.

What is the process the HOA Board uses to enforce the covenants?

Once a violation is reported or observed, an orange violation notice is issued. There is a process leading up to entering a property to correct a violation and charging the homeowner for the cost. We also may and have applied liens on property and received court judgments for payment in the most severe cases.

What if I need more time to correct the violation?

A Homeowner may ask for an extension to have more time to fix the violation. Most extensions are granted, however, these requests are taken on a case by case basis.

What if I disagree about the violation I received?

If you disagree with a violation you have received, you should contact the board member who issued the violation notice. If you feel the violation has been sent in error, you do not understand the violation or why it is a violation, please contact any board member.

What if I received a charge on my property?

The current board will not reduce any charges that stem from a covenant violation or un-paid dues. If it gets to a point of a charge against your property you have completely ignored the process and failed to communicate with the HOA board to resolve the issue. Any such requests should be made in writing and will be presented to the HOA board for review.

What are the common areas in our Community and who is responsible for maintaining them?

These areas are maintained by the Association: our entrance, the amenity area, the landscaped area in front of the retention pond in phase 3.

Who do I contact if the lights do not come on at the front entrance or a street light is out?

We have two types of lights: First, the type that shines on the entrance sign. Please contact any board member if the front entrance light is not working. Second, if there are street lights that are out, call Snapping Shoals EMC (770-786-3484) our electric company. You must have the street address or the pole #.

Who is responsible for maintaining the retention ponds?

The responsibility of the landscaping in front of the retention pond is part of the HOAs landscaping/common area maintenance program. The retention pond inside the fence is the responsibility of Henry County and is on a maintenance schedule every 13 months.

Why do I need approval to improve the appearance of my property? Most Covenants require approval for any improvements to your property. Receiving approval protects all the property owners against home owners constructing something that is not attractive or consistent with the rest of the community. Every community is different and has guidelines.

What information is required when I submit a request?

Submit plans via our web site or contact any HOA board member. Plans must include (but not limited to) description, dimensions, materials, location, color sample, and pictures if possible. A form is available for download at www.thelaurelshoa.org

How do I contact the Board of Directors?

All of the contact information is posted on the web site www.thelaurelshoa.org

When is the next HOA meeting?

Annual Meeting dates are posted on the web site and at the entrance. Each homeowner will also be sent written notice of the annual meeting by the Homeowners Association.

How can I become a Board Member?

Board members are elected by the members of the community. We hold elections anytime an existing board member resigns and any open board seats/elections are announced at our annual meeting. Any Homeowner may challenge a sitting board member any time. Contact any board member if you would like to begin this process.

Who is Sentry Management?

Sentry is basically our accounting firm. They handle all of the financial transactions for our HOA. Dues payment, vendor payments, contracts, legal and compliance issues. This is the official address of our Homeowners Association and where you mail your annual dues:

Sentry Management
303 Corporate Center Suite 300A
Stockbridge, GA 30281
770-389-6528

What is our Annual Budget?

A copy of the annual operating budget for The Laurels HOA is on the web site. Essentially we spend what we take in or about \$20,000 per year. A basic break out would be as follows: Landscaping and common area maintenance 60% Legal, insurance, taxes, meetings 15% Utilities, lawn irrigation, street and entrance lights 15% Sentry Management accounting and banking fees 10%

Are Board Members Paid to serve on the HOA Board? No, it is written in our covenants that no Board member shall receive compensation. Any expenditure must be voted on and approved by the entire HOA board and is written into our meeting minutes. We are a volunteer board of homeowners who care about our community and are happy to serve.

Who is responsible for maintaining the vacant lots?

The land owner is. It is private property, however the HOA will enter and cut the lots periodically and then charge the land owners account for the cost. It's the same process on foreclosed properties that become unsightly.

How do I find out who owns a specific property address or lot number in the Laurels?

The best way to make sure you get accurate and current owner information is at the Henry County property Tax office. Most of this information is available online.

How many homes are in the Laurels H.O.A.?

We currently have 125 home sites, 9 vacant lots and two common areas (amenity area and retention pond) within the community. Contact information for the HOA Board, important phone numbers and other helpful information may be found on our web site: www.thelaurelshoa.org